

Message Text

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SUBJECT: 30TH UNGA FOURTH COMMITTEE: RHODESIAN MERCENARIES
AND BOTSWANA

REF: GABORONE 1428

FOLLOWING IS TEXT OF OCTOBER 21 LETTER FROM BOTSWANA
PERM REP TO CHAIRMAN OF FOURTH COMMITTEE, REPRODUCED AND
DISTRIBUTED AS GA DOCUMENT A/C4/791: QUOTE

QUESTION OF SOUTHERN RHODESIA

LETTER DATED 21 OCTOBER 1975 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE
OF BOTSWANA TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE CHAIRMAN OF
THE FOURTH COMMITTEE

PURSUANT TO THE DEBATE CONCLUDED RECENTLY ON THE QUESTION OF
SOUTHERN RHODESIA IN THE FOURTH COMMITTEE OF THE UNITED NATIONS
GENERAL ASSEMBLY, I HAVE THE HONOUR TO BRING TO YOUR ATTENTION
FOR INFORMATION A TEXT OF THE PRESS RELEASE ISSUED BY THE OFFICE
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OF THE PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF BOTSWANA ON MONDAY,

20 OCTOBER 1975, CONCERNING THE CONTINUING ACTS OF AGGRESSION PERPETRATED BY IAN SMITH'S MINORITY REGIME IN SOUTHERN RHODESIA, AGAINST THE REPUBLIC OF BOTSWANA.

"AT 5.45 P.M. ON SUNDAY, 19 OCTOBER 1975, ABOUT 25 RHODESIAN SOLDIERS, INCLUDING ONE AFRICAN, IN UNIFORM WERE SEEN NEAR MATSILOJE VILLAGE IN THE BED OF THE RAMOKGWEBANA RIVER WHICH IS THE BOUNDARY BETWEEN BOTSWANA AND RHODESIA. THE SOLDIERS OPENED FIRE ON THE VILLAGE AND CONTINUED FIRING FOR ABOUT HALF AN HOUR. THREE SHOTS HIT THE VILLAGE CLINIC, A FURTHER SIX HIT A TOILET NEAR THE CLINIC AND 32 SHOTS HIT A DAIRY. PEOPLE LIVING IN THE VILLAGE ABANDONED THEIR HOUSES AND FLED TO THE BUSH. TWENTY-THREE VILLAGERS WENT IN A LORRY TO THE NEAREST POLICE STATION IN FRANCISTOWN, WHICH IS ABOUT 56 KILOMETRES WEST OF MATSILOJE TO REPORT THE MATTER. ON RECEIVING THE REPORT, THE POLICE MOBILE UNIT RUSEHD TO MATSILOJE BUT THE RHODESIAN SOLIDERS HAD LEFT BEFORE THEIR ARRIVAL. THEY RECOVERED 87 EMPTY CARTRIDGE CASES OF 7.62 CALIBRE IN THE RIVER BED.

"THIS COWARDLY ATTACK BY THE RHODESIAN SOLDIERS ON UNARMED VILLAGERS IS THE LATEST OF THE SERIES OF VIOLATIONS OF THE TERRITORIAL SOVEREIGNTY OF BOTSWANA BY THE RHODESIANS SECURITY FORCES. IT WILL BE RECALLED THAT ON 13 OCTOBER 1974 A RHODESIAN REFUGEE, ETHAN DUBE, WAS KIDNAPPED BY RHODESIAN AGENTS IN FRANCISTOWN AND TAKEN ACROSS THE BORDER NEAR MATSILOJE TO RHODESIA. ON 19 AUGUST 1975, MEMBERS OF THE RHODESIAN SECURITY FORCES FIRED A SHOT AT A GROUP OF BATSWANA CHILDREN WHO WERE FETCHING WATER FROM THE RAMOKGWEBANA RIVER NEAR MATSILOJE. ON TWO OCCASIONS DURING AUGUST, MEMBERS OF THE RHODESIAN SECURITY FORCES ENTERED WEST BOTSWANA WEST OF BOSOLI AND QUESTIONED BATSWANA IN THE AREA ABOUT THE ALLEGED PRESENCE OF FREEDOM FIGHTERS THERE. PAMPHLETS REGARDING THE BORDER CURFEW REGULATIONS WERE DROPPED FROM AN AIRCRAFT WELL WITHIN BOTSWANA BY THE RHODESIANS. ON 14 SEPTEMBER 1975, TWO AMERICAN MERCENARIES, BELISARIO AND ACHESON, WERE ARRESTED AT PALAPYE FOR BEING IN ILLEGAL POSSESSION OF FIRE ARMS. THEY HAD ENTERED BOTSWANA FROM RHODESIA AND WERE CARRYING OUT A MISSION FOR THE RHODESIAN SPECIAL BRANCH. THEY WERE INSTRUCTED TO LOCATE SO-CALLED TERRORIST TRAINING CAMPS IN BOTSWANA AND TO REPORT ON THEM TO THE RHODESIAN AUTHORITIES. THE ATTACK ON THE BOTSWANA POLICE MOBILE UNIT CAMP AT KAZUNGULA ON 11 OCTOBER 1975 WAS CARRIED OUT UNCLASSIFIED

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BY PERSONS WHO HAD ENTERED BOTSWANA FROM RHODESIA. THE SPOKESMAN SAID THAT THE BOTSWANA GOVERNMENT CAN ONLY ASSUME THAT THESE UNPROVOKED ATTACKS, CULMINATING IN THE LATEST DASTARDLY ATTACK ON PEACEFUL VILLAGERS, BY AGENTS OF THE ILLEGAL REGIME ARE A RESULT OF BOTSWANA'S POLICY OF GIVING REFUGE TO VICTIMS OF MURDER AND OPPRESSION IN RHODESIA. THE REGIME IS PROPAGATING FALSE RUMOURS THAT TRAINING CAMPS FOR ZIMBABWE FREEDOM FIGHTERS HAVE BEEN ESTABLISHED IN BOTSWANA AS AN EXCUSE FOR ITS AGGRESSIVE

CONDUCT. THESE DESPERATE ACTS CLEARLY DEMONSTRATE THAT THE REBEL REGIME HAS NO DESIRE TO CREATE THE CLIMATE FOR PEACEFUL CHANGE IN SOUTHERN AFRICA. HOWEVER, IT MUST BE CLEARLY UNDERSTOOD BY SMITH AND HIS SUPPORTERS THAT BOTSWANA WILL NOT BE INTIMIDATED INTO CHANGING ITS POLICY REGARDING REFUGEES FROM RHODESIA."

I WOULD BE GRATEFUL, MADAM CHAIRMAN, IF YOU COULD CIRCULATE THIS COMMUNICATION TO THE MEMBER REPRESENTATIVES AND OBSERVERS OF THE FOURTH COMMITTEE, AS WELL AS TO THE PRESS, FOR THEIR INFORMATION.

(SIGNED) THEBE D. MOGAMI, AMBASSADOR AND
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE UNQUOTE
MOYNIHAN

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